



RIDE Standards for Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs

Family Engagement

Description:

Programs utilize a variety of strategies to become acquainted with and learn about the families in their program and use this information to enhance curriculum at the program and classroom level. The program implements intentional strategies to create a welcoming environment and to engage in reciprocal communication with all families. Programs understand the unique characteristics of families and make every effort to meet families where they are at and connect with them in ways that are meaningful to them. There is a continuum of opportunities available for families to be engaged in supporting their child's growth and development and to be involved in program-level decision-making.

Indicators:

- I. The program has a written **philosophy statement** that addresses family engagement and guides all aspects of family partnerships.
- II. The program has a **written plan** that describes program policies and practices for involving families in program decision-making, engaging families in their child's education, and providing opportunities for families to be active participants in supporting their child's learning and development both at home and in the program.
- III. The program has a **system that supports** practitioners to develop competencies they need to make positive connections with families and strengthen families' involvement in the program and in their child's learning and development.

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Program Assessment Worksheets

I. Program Philosophy

Guiding Questions

- Does the program's written philosophy statement address family engagement?
- Does the statement include the important role that families play in their child's learning and development and the program's commitment to provide opportunities to engage families?
- Does the statement include the important role that families play in being involved in program-level decision-making?
- Is the philosophy statement available to program staff, families, and other interested people and written in a way that is understandable and clear to staff and families?

Program strengths:

Ways that our program can be strengthened and improved:

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II. Written Plan Describing Family Engagement Services

(6.7) The program's governing structure or advisory groups shall include families as members and supports them as active participants. Family members are encouraged to take on leadership roles.

(10.1) The program level written plan delineates the expectation that all teaching staff engage families in the education of their child. The program level written framework describes the opportunities for families to be involved in program decision-making (e.g. advisory groups) and delineates the expectation that all teaching staff engage families in the education of their child.

(10.2) Families are encouraged to take on leadership roles and are actively involved in decision-making opportunities.

(10.3) The program uses a variety of methods to engage families in active two-way communication on an ongoing basis such as new family orientations, small group meetings, individual conversations, notes between program and home, and written questionnaires.

(10.4) The program shall be open to families for observation and visits whenever the program is in operation.

(10.5) The program implements activities to facilitate the transition of children and families including:

- a. Opportunities for the child and parent to visit the program one or more times prior to enrollment.
- b. Activities to support internal transitions within the program, e.g. from class to class, during program enrollment.
- c. Strategies to support families with their transitions to other programs or schools at the end of enrollment. These strategies may include basic general information on future program options, enrollment procedures and practices, and opportunities for program visitation.

(10.6) The program actively seeks and utilizes input from families in the following areas:

- a. Establishing or refining program philosophies, long-term goals and short term objectives,
- b. Conducting program assessment and evaluation,
- c. Designing family engagement opportunities,
- d. Establishing strategies to ensure that the program remains relevant to the values, culture, identity and home language,
- e. Creating a physical environment that is welcoming to families.

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(10.7) The program plans and implements a wide variety of opportunities for families to be engaged in their child's education both within the program and in the family's home.

(10.8) The program makes efforts to accommodate families with special needs and circumstances so that they can take full advantage of family engagement opportunities.

Guiding Questions

- Does the program have a written plan that describes family engagement practices?
- Does the plan include opportunities for families to be engaged in program-level decision-making?
- Does the plan include strategies to get to know families and for the families to get to know the staff and the program?
- Does the plan include strategies to provide an environment that is welcoming and engaging for families in the program?
- Does the plan include strategies to enhance reciprocal informal and formal communication between program staff and families?
- Does the plan include strategies for families to provide input on goals for their child?
- Does the plan include a continuum of opportunities for families to be involved in their child's education program both at home and at school?

Program strengths:

Ways that our program can be strengthened and improved:

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III. Staff Support

(10.9) The program has a system that supports teaching staff in developing competencies to enhance families' involvement in the program and in their child's learning and development.

Guiding Questions

- Is there a program-wide process for determining staff's strengths and needs in the area of family engagement?
- Does the process include self-reflection and feedback from administrators, peers, and families?
- Are staff encouraged to be self-directed learners by engaging in an ongoing self-assessment of their competencies related to family engagement?
- Is there a written plan describing how the program supports the professional development of staff that is based on the strengths and needs of practitioners?
- Does the program's professional development plan utilize a variety of resources and strategies to support staff in acquiring needed competencies in the area of family engagement?

Program strengths:

Ways that our program can be strengthened and improved:

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Name: _____

Date _____

Program Quality Improvement Plan

RIDE Standards for Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL:		
Strategies	Time Frame	Progress

GOAL:		
Strategies	Time Frame	Progress

Date we will evaluate progress and reassess goals: _____